

Testimony Ashley Stewart submitted to the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee

February 16th, 2016

Good day Senator Duff, Representative Janowski, Senator Kane, Representative Buck-Taylor and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. My name is Ashley Stewart and it is an honor and privilege to be appointed as a member of the Thames River Valley Flood Control Commission by Governor Dannel P. Malloy.

My sincere thanks to this committee for the opportunity to appear before you to speak to my desire and qualifications to serve on this important Commission. I am passionately committed to environmental issues and have invested my career (and volunteer time) in advancing cause of responsible use of one of our most precious natural resources, water.

By way of background, I graduated from Temple University with a degree in Civil Engineering and upon graduation, I joined a prestigious engineering firm in New York City. I had the opportunity to work on master planning projects for the City of New York water supply systems. Today I have worked in the field of civil engineering for almost ten years; six years in the private sector in New York City, New Jersey and Connecticut, and the last four years I have worked for the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

My current work within the Engineering Services Section of the Inland Water Resources Division of the Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse is at the level of a Civil Engineer 2. In this role I oversee dam and flood control inspections, solicit federal funding for rehabilitating flood control projects, and manage state-funded dam repair for municipally owned dams. Recently, I completed inspections of approximately 70 high and significant hazard state-owned dams and flood control projects.

Although my husband and I currently reside in Manchester, I have also served as a volunteer in my former town of East Hartford on the Inland Wetlands committee. As a member of this committee, I considered building projects and their potential impact on the environment and applied my training in water systems to help our town build in a way that honored its natural resources.

As I sit before you today, I am seeking to bring my knowledge, skills and passion to bear on the work of the Thames River Valley Flood Control Commission.

Connecticut has participated in the Thames River Flood Control Compact since its inception in 1957. After the 1955 flood, the ACOE constructed various flood control projects within the greater Thames River Valley. These projects control floods and have provided significant benefits to communities along the basin corridor. In Massachusetts, these upstream flood control projects include reservoirs at East Brimfield on the Quinebaug River (67 square miles drainage), Buffumville on the Little River (26 square miles drainage), Hodges Village on the French River (30 square miles drainage), and Westville on the Quinebaug River (90 square miles drainage). In

Connecticut, flood control dams were built at Mansfield Hollow and Thompson. The Thames River Valley Flood Control Commission consists of six members, three from each state.

Under the interstate compact, which governs the flood control commission in return for the benefit of protection from loss of property or life due to flooding, the State of Connecticut reimburses the state of Massachusetts forty percent of the amount of taxes lost due to the federal ownership or control of lands for flood control projects. The State of Connecticut makes an annual payment which supports the commission activities, office, travel, administration, etc. The Flood Control Commission is charged with, among other things, establishing the tax loss and invoicing Connecticut. One of my duties as an appointee to this Commission would be to monitor the activities of the flood control commission and assure that Connecticut's payments are made in accordance with the interstate compact.

The periodic flooding such as occurred during recent storms Irene and Sandy highlight the need for Connecticut to continue to be vigilant regarding flood control issues. I am honored to be nominated and be given the opportunity to represent the state on the Thames River Valley Flood Control Commission. I believe my experience in the areas of dam safety and flood control will make me a useful addition to the commission and allow me to protect the State's interest in assuring flood control protection for its citizens.

I appreciate your kind consideration and welcome the opportunity to answer any questions.

Thank you.